

AMENDMENT OF THE CLAIMS:

A complete listing of the claims and their status as of this Amendment is as follows:

- 1.(Currently amended) A method of activating and metallising an aromatic polymer film including the steps of:
~~treating~~ pre-treating a first surface of ~~the~~ an aromatic polymer film with a basic solution;
~~following the pre-treatment step,~~ applying to said first surface of the film an aqueous seeding solution comprising polymer-stabilized catalyst particles; and
~~then~~ immersing the film in an electroless plating bath comprising ions of a desired metal so as to deposit a layer of said metal onto the first surface of said film.
- 2.(Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the basic solution is a solution of potassium hydroxide.
- 3.(Currently amended) The method of claim 1 ~~or claim 2~~, wherein after the basic solution treatment step, an acidic solution is applied to said first surface.
- 4.(Previously presented) The method of claim 3 wherein the acidic solution is a solution of protic acid such as hydrochloric acid (HCl) or acetic acid.
- 5.(Currently amended) The method of ~~any one of claims~~ claim 1 ~~to 4~~, wherein the aqueous seeding solution comprises polymer-stabilised palladium particles.
- 6.(Currently amended) The method of ~~any one of claims~~ claim 1 ~~to 5~~, wherein the catalyst particles are stabilised by a water-soluble polymer.
- 7.(Previously presented) The method of claim 6, wherein the water-soluble polymer is polyvinyl pyrrolidone (PVP) or polyvinyl alcohol (PVA).
- 8.(Previously presented) The method of claim 7, wherein the water-soluble

polymer is PVP.

9.(Currently amended) The method of ~~any one of claims~~ claim 5 to 8, wherein the palladium particles have diameters of from 1 to 50 nanometers.

10.(Currently amended) The method of ~~any one of claims~~ claim 1 to 9, wherein the desired metal is selected from the group consisting of nickel, copper and gold.

Claim 11 (Cancelled)

12.(Currently amended) The method of ~~any one of claims~~ claim 1 to 14, wherein the basic solution is applied by immersing the film in a bath of the basic solution.

13.(Currently amended) The method of ~~any one of claims~~ claim 1 to 14, wherein the basic solution is applied by spraying a layer of the solution onto the first surface of said film.

14.(Currently amended) The method of ~~claim 12 or claim 13~~ 1, wherein the film is maintained in contact with the basic solution for 1 to 15 minutes after which the basic solution is washed off.

15.(Currently amended) The method of ~~any one of claims~~ claim 1 to 14, wherein the aqueous seeding solution is applied by immersing the film in a bath of the seeding solution.

16.(Previously presented) The method of claim 15, wherein said immersion is for a period of from 5 to 60 seconds.

17.(Currently amended) The method of ~~any one of claims~~ claim 1 to 16, wherein, after application of the aqueous seeding solution, the film is washed with de-

ionised water to remove excess catalyst particles.

18.(Currently amended) The method of ~~any one of claims~~ claim 1 to 17, wherein after the depositing of the layer of the desired metal, the film is washed with de-ionised water and dried.

19.(Currently amended) The method of ~~any one of claims~~ claim 1 to 18, wherein after the depositing of the layer of the desired metal, the film is heated to improve adhesion between the film and the metal layer.

20.(Currently amended) The method of ~~any one of claims~~ claim 1 to 19, wherein prior to the step of applying the basic solution, vias are formed, either substantially or entirely, through the film.

21.(Previously presented) The method of claim 20, wherein the vias are formed using laser drilling techniques.

22.(Currently amended) The method of ~~any one of claims~~ claim 1 to 21, wherein prior to the step of applying the basic solution, photoresist material is applied to the film and said photoresist material is developed so as to facilitate patterning of desired ~~circuitry~~ circuitry onto said film.

23.(Currently amended) The method of ~~any one of claims~~ claim 1 to 22 wherein, prior to the step of applying the basic solution, the film is cleaned and dried.

24.(Previously presented) The method of claim 23, wherein the cleaning is effected by ultrasonication in acetone and de-ionised water.

25.(Previously presented) The method of claim 24, wherein further cleaning is effected by ozone treatment at elevated temperature.

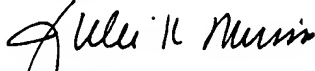
26.(Previously presented) The method of claim 25, wherein the ozone treatment is conducted at about 80°C for between 3 and 10 minutes.

27.(Currently amended) The method of ~~any one of claims~~ claim 1 to 26, wherein the aromatic polymer film is formed of polyimide.

Claim 28 (Cancelled)

29.(Currently amended) A metal coated aromatic polymer film made according to the method of ~~any one of claims claim 1 to 28~~
pre-treating a first surface of an aromatic polymer film with a basic solution;
following the pre-treatment step, applying to said first surface of the film an aqueous
seeding solution comprising polymer-stabilized catalyst particles; and
then immersing the film in an electroless plating bath comprising ions of a desired metal
so as to deposit a layer of said metal onto the first surface of said film.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Julie K. Morriss". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Julie" being more prominent.

Julie K. Morriss

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